

**Request for Proposals (RFP) for a Cooperative Agreement  
for the Continued Operation of the  
Printers' National Environmental Assistance Center**

**I. Summary**

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has funded the development and operation of 10 compliance assistance centers (centers) to help small and medium size businesses and local governments better understand and comply with environmental regulations. EPA seeks a partner for the Printers' National Environmental Assistance Center's (PNEAC) continued operation and maintenance. Proposals meeting the criteria discussed below must be delivered to EPA by 5:00 p.m., June 18, 2003.

**II. Background**

EPA has sponsored partnerships with industry, academic institutions, environmental groups and other federal and state agencies to establish 13 Compliance Assistance Centers. PNEAC is 1 of the 13 Centers. PNEAC helps printers reduce waste and emissions from their operations while improving the associated environmental performance and compliance status of those operations. PNEAC seeks to serve printers by working in collaboration with printing trade organizations, waste reduction technical assistance programs, compliance assistance programs, and regulatory agencies. PNEAC serves all types and sizes of printers but places special emphasis on meeting the needs of smaller printers. PNEAC is funded through a grant with the University of Illinois for the period 7/17/02 through 7/16/03. Under the Grants Competition Policy that went into effect October 1, 2002, EPA now competes any assistance agreement or grant that will provide the recipient more than \$75,000 in a year.

PNEAC is intended as a "first-stop shop" that provides information, tools, and services useful to printers to assist them in reducing waste and emissions from their operations while improving the associated environmental performance and compliance status of those operations. The center's environmental compliance information, tools, and services must be easy to read, easy to use, and tailored specifically to the environmental aspects of printers.

To achieve this goal, the recipient must:

- Create Internet linkages and partnerships among the various printers, printer trade organizations, EPA and other federal regulatory agencies, other relevant organizations, and the compliance assistance provider communities.
- Develop content (including, regulatory and pollution prevention information) that will address the needs of printers.

EPA helped in the establishment of PNEAC and the other centers by sponsoring partnerships with industry, academics, stakeholder organizations, environmental groups, and other agencies. The centers provide comprehensive, easy to understand, sector-specific compliance information, tools, and services. After extensive discussions within EPA and outside stakeholders, a need was identified for a printers compliance assistance center. EPA awarded a cooperative agreement to the University of Illinois Waste Management and Research Center, in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin Solid and Hazardous Waste Education Center, and the Graphic Arts Technical Foundation to support the operation and maintenance of the PNEAC.

As stated above, the assistance agreement with PNEAC's partners expires in July 2003. In accordance with EPA policy encouraging competition for assistance agreements, the Agency now seeks proposals from qualified applicants who can partner with the EPA, various printer trade organizations and other interested parties who have the capability to support the continued operation and maintenance of PNEAC and to provide outreach efforts to other entities.

In general, the centers provide comprehensive, easy to understand sector-specific compliance information. The centers offer a variety of services, depending on the needs of the sector. All the centers help businesses, tribes, local governments, and federal agencies identify specific regulations that apply to their activities, improve compliance with environmental regulations, and learn about pollution prevention approaches that can save money and resources. All centers can be accessed at [www.assistancecenters.net](http://www.assistancecenters.net).

EPA reviewed the responses to its April 2003 Request for Initial Proposals, and determined that certain initial proposals meet the eligibility criteria. EPA now seeks, by June 18, 2003, proposals from those eligible applicants for continued operation and maintenance of center for the printing sector. EPA anticipates making approximately \$600,000 available over a 5-year period for this purpose. EPA will partially fund each budget period and will consider funding the balance of budget requests contingent upon satisfactory progress as certified by the EPA Project Officer, the availability of funds, and EPA priorities.

### **III. Authority**

EPA will, as its annual appropriation allows, award financial assistance to the successful applicant in the form of a cooperative agreement. As authorized by 31 U.S.C. §6305, EPA will be substantially involved in carrying out this project. Anticipated substantial involvement will include collaboration in carrying out the scope of work, technical assistance, approval of the substantive terms of contracts and subawards made with EPA funds, change of key personnel, and approval of project phases prior to continuation of the project.

The Agreement will be funded on a “multimedia” basis under Section 103 of the Clean Air Act, 42 U.S.C. §7403, Section 104 of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. §1254, and Section 8001 of the Solid Waste Disposal Act, 42 U.S.C. §6981. Applicants are encouraged to review these statutes and ensure that all of the activities contained in their proposals are consistent with the scope of EPA’s authority.

Funding for Compliance Assistance Centers is awarded under Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 66.305, Compliance Assistance- Support for Services to the Regulated Community and Other Assistance Providers.

#### **IV. Applicant Eligibility**

Only those applicants that have been invited to participate following the Request for Initial Proposals are eligible.

#### **V. Overview of PNEAC**

PNEAC provides information, tools, and services that facilitate environmental compliance, pollution prevention, and environmental management systems. PNEAC also provides regulatory updates, expert answers to environmental questions, a consultants directory, and links to other services and sources of environmental information. PNEAC operates two listservs, operates an interactive web site, provides information for a fax-back service operated by an U.S. EPA contractor, and has an active relationship with industry associations to co-sponsor annual environmental health and safety conferences for the industry. PNEAC also monitors approximately 100 sources for printing-related environmental news and continually reviews documents produced by other organizations to determine their technical soundness and suitability for being posted on their web site. Working with its partners and EPA, PNEAC requires the most up-to-date environmental information and makes that information available to subscribers. Environmental compliance information is made available in its original form and in plain-language versions. PNEAC invites comments and feedback from users to continually improve the content and usability of the web-site. Printers can interact with their peers and others online at PNEAC, learn of the latest environmental developments, and access a calendar of events.

PNEAC development was possible in part through the financial resources of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. These resources allowed EPA and its partners to bring environmental compliance information to printers through a toll free number, the web-site, fact sheets, news updates, calendar of events, and other documents on the web-site.

PNEAC currently uses Cold Fusion. It has a minimum amount of broad band demand to promote quick loading. It has been tested for use on IE as well as Netscape. In the past there have been approximately 25,000-40,000 user sessions each month on the website. PNEAC also responds to technical questions posted by the public on their

web site. There are about 300 subscribers on their listservs. Note, this data is provided for informational purposes only. Applicants can propose alternative approaches to carrying out the center. And the EPA can provide copies of the content to the recipient.

## **VI. Project Proposal**

All applicants must submit a proposal that identifies their ability to manage the Center. Project proposals must, at a minimum, include the following items: Executive Summary, Project Activities, the Center Management Plan, Clients Needs, and Available Technologies as outlined below. EPA will negotiate a detailed scope of work with the successful applicant. The successful applicant will be asked to submit a Standard Form 424, Application for Federal Assistance following negotiation of the work plan. (See [www.whitehouse.gov/OMB/grants/SF424.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/OMB/grants/SF424.pdf)) Please note that the final application will be subject to the Executive Order 12372 Intergovernmental Review Process. (See [www.cfda.gov/public/EO12372.htm](http://www.cfda.gov/public/EO12372.htm)) Applicants must clearly mark information they consider Confidential Business Information (CBI). EPA will make final confidentiality decisions in accordance with Agency regulations at 40 CFR Part 2, Subpart B. The applicant should consider the following project proposal format:

Executive Summary: A summary of the planned project.

The proposal should include a description of the following planned activities including milestones. Describe the approach(es) to:

- Maintain and supplement content currently available at the Centers' websites.
- Identify compliance assistance needs and close gaps in environmental compliance assistance materials and services currently provided to printers.
- Maintain, develop, and enhance working relationship(s) with experts and national organizations devoted to the proper operation, management, and funding of printer businesses.
- Conduct outreach to the printers and promote use of the center.
- Explore and implement revenue generating activities to reduce the Centers' reliance on federal funding.
- Correct, as necessary, content on the web-site that needs to be updated.
- Maintain communications with the Centers' stakeholders.
- C Maintain list serv archives, calendar of events, other web information resources and site search features.
- C Maintain and develop web links, search engines, trade organizations, TAP's regulatory agencies and other programs.
- C Maintain user statistics.
- C Promote the Centers' services and products

Management Plan: A thorough discussion of how the grant will be managed, including:

- C Internal Management Plan: Describe how the applicant will ensure the day to day success of the project. This description should include the proposed organizational structure, supervisory responsibilities, and a proposed staffing plan.
- C External Management Plan: Project proposals must describe how the cooperative agreement recipient will solicit / maintain partners to support the center. Illustrate organizational structure between the primary project partners and supporting entities. Please note that all contracts for the purchase of goods and services must comply with the competitive procurement requirements of 40 CFR Part 30.
- C Marketing and Outreach: A description of a marketing and outreach activity plan to promote the services provided by the center.
- C Financial Plan: A financial plan for the project that identifies all sources of funds. Although EPA does not require matching funds, the grant recipient is encouraged to provide information regarding resources (cash/in-kind services) that they would commit to manage center. The financial plan should break out planned expenditures by both activity (e.g., maintenance of the web site) and object class (e.g., personnel, travel).

Factors that EPA will evaluate in the financial plan include:

- ~ Ability to partner with other organizations to secure funding or in-kind services to reduce reliance on Federal funding.
- ~ Ability to maintain management control and track costs of the project and maintain required records on funding.

Past Experience and Qualifications of Key Personnel: Project proposals must:

- C Describe the applicant's experience in developing and maintaining web based environmental compliance assistance services, or similar projects, and its experience in working with compliance issues related to printers.
- C Provide information on its experience in managing Federal financial assistance, including the results of audits or monitoring by the awarding agency.
- C Include a description of the qualifications and experience of key personnel and their responsibilities. A detailed description of how the qualification and/or experience of each key personnel match with his/her responsibilities is important.

Clients Needs: Understanding the environmental needs of printers is critical to the continued success and sustainability of the Centers. Project proposals should address the following areas. How will:

- C The applicant ensure the web site continues to be useful to the targeted user group(s)?
- C The experiences of the key personnel enhance the centers; operation?
- C The applicant identify the environmental compliance needs of the targeted user group(s)?

Center Technologies/Configuration: The ability to readily seamlessly adopt and maintain the existing center site and associated software is critical. Project proposals should address how:

- The recipient will ensure seamless operation of the Centers' capabilities.
- The recipient will assure that operation and technologies meet the needs of the users as identified by contact with the targeted user group(s) and trade association representatives.

Collaboration with Other Compliance Assistance Providers: The proposal must explain how the Center will interact and collaborate with other compliance assistance providers, government agencies, trade associations, and organizations. Specifically, the proposal should address the following:

- How the applicant will collaborate with other compliance assistance providers to leverage limited resources.
- Methods that the applicant will use to promote the use of the Center among other compliance assistance providers.
- How the applicant will evaluate yearly and demonstrate the success of the Center, including output measurements and, if possible, measurements of risk reduction or compliance improvements for the targeted audience that uses the Center.

## **VII. Pre-application Assistance**

Eligible and interested applicants may contact Joseph Hall (202) 564-2271; [hall.joseph@epa.gov](mailto:hall.joseph@epa.gov) or Sharie Centilla (202) 564-0697; email: [centilla.sharie@epa.gov](mailto:centilla.sharie@epa.gov) with questions. EPA will post answers to significant or frequently asked questions on a web-site at <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/assistance/centers/index.html>. Applicants are encouraged to review these questions and answers prior to submitting initial proposals. Please note, the Agency cannot provide guidance on proposal development or other advice that may provide a competitive advantage.

## **VIII. Proposal Evaluation Criteria**

EPA will use the following criteria to rank applications. Each proposal will be given a high, medium or low rating for each criterion. Each criterion will receive equal weight when EPA reviewers determine the overall merit of the proposal. Based on the ratings, EPA reviewers will select up to two proposals for consideration by the Agency selecting official.

1. Comprehensiveness of proposed approach to service delivery.
2. Innovations that may enhance compliance assistance services available to printers.
3. Demonstrated understanding of environmental compliance challenges faced by printers.
4. Cost effectiveness and efficiency of proposed activities.
5. Qualifications and experience of key personnel in relation to their responsibilities.
6. Previous performance history on similar projects.
7. Soundness of approach to collaborating with other organizations.
8. Soundness of approach to outreach to all segments of the printing sector.
9. Soundness of proposed revenue generating activities that may reduce the center's reliance on Federal funding.

Any disputes that arise during the selection process will be resolved in accordance with 40 CFR 330.63 and Part 31, subpart F. (See web-site at <http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/index.html>.) Please note that EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals or applications and make no awards.

## **IX. Proposal Submission**

Interested applicants should submit three copies of the proposal to the following address to be postmarked by June 18, 2003.

Mr. Joseph Hall (Mail Code 2224A)  
Office of Compliance, OECA  
US Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20460

Each proposal should not exceed 30 pages and it should include all of the information requested in this solicitation with a break down of budget for each category. A team of EPA personnel will evaluate the proposals based on the criteria set forth in Section VI and identify two applications for further consideration. An authorized Agency Approval Official in OECA will select the final applicant. An EPA award official will make the final award. EPA is expected to select the final cooperative agreement recipient by June 27, 2003. For questions, please contact Joseph Hall by phone at (202) 564-2271; or e-mail at [hall.joseph@epa.gov](mailto:hall.joseph@epa.gov) or Sharie Centilla by phone at (202) 564-0697, fax at (202) 564-0009 or e-mail at [centilla.sharie@epa.gov](mailto:centilla.sharie@epa.gov).

